



Media Fairness Initiative

A Look at Bias in the News



Media Continue to Give More Airtime to Democrats 1/23/08

The mainstream media continue to devote disproportionate news coverage to the Democratic presidential campaign.

For example, on the day before the Republican primary in Michigan, NBC's *Today Show* devoted almost seven minutes to the race between Sen. Barack Obama and Sen. Hillary Clinton, compared to about 30 seconds to the Republican campaign.

In addition, on the Jan. 9 edition of NBC *Nightly News*, Brian Williams admitted that Sen. John McCain "didn't get all the attention he deserved" during NBC's coverage of the New Hampshire primary.

NBC isn't the only network giving more coverage to the Democrat race. The Jan. 7 edition of ABC's *Good Morning America* devoted almost 15 minutes of coverage to analyzing the race between Democrats Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. Just 30 seconds were devoted to the Republican race.

Economists Disagree with Media's Recession Predictions

While there is significant reason to be concerned about the state of the economy, news reports have portrayed the prospect of a recession as a near-certainty. Many economists disagree.

For example, a *Bloomberg News* survey of 62 economists released this month found that the economists predicted 1.5-percent growth in the first six months of 2008. The economists also estimated that there is just a 40 percent chance of recession in 2008.



"It's soft economic activity that feels like a recession, but we probably won't have one," said Mickey Levy, chief economist at Bank of America Corp. "The state of the consumer is clearly softening, but spending is not declining. That's very important."

A survey by the *Wall Street Journal* found similar results. The economists polled by *WSJ* estimated the chance of recession at 42 percent and predicted growth of less than 2 percent. The media, though, continue to focus on gloom-and-doom predictions.

Media Mischaracterize Importance of Values to Voters

Although the media sometimes downplay the importance of character issues in presidential elections, a new Harris poll finds that an overwhelming 85 percent of Americans consider moral values important when choosing a candidate. In the poll, 46 percent considered moral values "very important."

The most important personal characteristics mentioned by poll respondents were honesty, integrity, and ethical values. The poll results were largely ignored by the mainstream media.